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The history of early European Protestantism is inseparable from the history of the Catholic church. The movement for *reformatio* or reform within the existing framework, preceded the Reformation when Protestant churches finally split away from the church of Rome.

In the lands controlled by the grand princes of Moscow anti-Catholicism and later anti-Protestantism was part of the official ideology of both church and state. Yet, judging from histories of Russian thought in this period, the Reformation did not pass Russia by. According to a theory first argued in the works of Ia.S. Lur'e<sup>1</sup> and expanded by A.I. Klibanov<sup>2</sup> outbreaks of heresy in Russia's major cities between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries were not sporadic, but links in a continuous chain of 'opposition to the church and therefore the whole of the ruling class'<sup>3</sup> This was Russia's own Reformation movement, which expressed the discontent of Russia's poorer gentry and nascent bourgeoisie and found expression in ideas parallel to, though independent of, Reformation thought in the West.

The view that Russia had a Reformation movement was and remains influential<sup>4</sup>, though it has been the subject of debate<sup>5</sup> My paper aims to contribute to this debate by reconsidering some of the arguments.

The first of the heresies cited by Klibanov is the heresy of the *strigol'niki*. Under the year 1375 the Novgorod IVth chronicle says: "In that year the *strigol'niki* were punished, the deacon Mikita, the deacon Karp, and a third (man) who was his servant, and thrown off the bridge."<sup>6</sup> This laconic account is supplemented by six epistles, five of which mention the *strigol'niki* by name. All present problems of dating since they are found only in manuscripts of the early sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The earliest has been dated to the 1380's and the latest to 1427.<sup>8</sup> The epistles are attributed (by copyists) to members of the Byzantine and Russian hierarchy, and are addressed to the Congregations of Pskov and Novgorod. They tell us nothing about the origin of the name *strigol'niki*, the root of which may suggest either "shearers" or

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or "shorn"<sup>9</sup> Nor are they very enlightening about the beliefs of the *strigol'niki* or their practices. "*They speak of themselves as Christians*" but "say that man must repent to the earth" and "revile the great calling of God's clergy" by accusing them of simony. "Without consecration or priestly calling, in their pride and arrogance they appoint themselves as priests of the people"<sup>10</sup>.

Klibanov mentions that the fourteenth century witnessed attempts at reform of monastic life by the church itself. He is, however, more interested in what he sees as the next link in the chain of the Russian Reformation, which he terms "religious opposition" because it was initiated by two high-ranking members of the clergy, both bishops of Tver<sup>11</sup>

We possess only one testimony giving the views of Fedor Dobryi, appointed in 1342. It is an epistle from archbishop Vasilii Kalika of Novgorod who reproaches Fedor for saying that "the paradise of Adam is dead" for "if God's paradise lies in the East, why is Adam's body lying in Jerusalem". It appears that Fedor disagreed with Vasilii about the existence of an earthly, visible paradise, saying that it is "in the mind" Fedor retired to a monastery in 1360, possibly forced to relinquish his see.

We know even less of the life and beliefs of Evfimii Vislen, who became bishop in 1374. Our only sources are the *Life* of his opponent and successor Arsenios, written a century after the events it describes, and a chronicle note of his deposition in 1390. It appears that Evfimii was tried by a special synod in Tver, presided over by the head of the Russian church, metropolitan Cyprian, and imprisoned for "rebellion and inciting discord within the church".

Soon after Evfimii's trial and imprisonment a heretic called Markian was unmasked by Iakov, bishop of Rostov. Markian was said to be of the Armenian persuasion, an iconoclast and anti-Trinitarian. The only reference to him found so far comes in a nineteenth century edifying narration of the life of Iakov, based on a manuscript now lost<sup>12</sup>

Some time before 1487 the archbishop of Novgorod discovered another heresy in his see, which he described as the heresy of "the Novgorod heretics who judaize", and known to historians as the Judaizers' or Novgorod-Moscow heresy. As the second name implies adherents of the heresy were also eventually found in Moscow. Though the sources for this heresy are more extensive<sup>13</sup> they still present a far from clear picture of the beliefs of the heretics. Like their predecessors, the Judaizers were accused of anti-clericalism, but in addition they apparently:

- 1) denied the Virgin birth, the Resurrection and the Trinity;

2) did not accept the sacred authority of any books which speak of the Holy Trinity, but rather held to the Law of Moses;

3) denied Christ as the Son of God promised in the Scriptures;

4) blasphemed against icons;

5) claimed that the writings of the church Fathers were untrue;

6) denied the truth of the Scriptures and all sacred writings, and

7) condemned the monastic way of life<sup>14</sup>

The Judaizers were tried and condemned at three councils of the church in 1488, 1490 and 1504. Though there is some doubt about the exact nature of the final council, eight men are known to have been condemned to death at the stake and many others imprisoned. By 1510 the heresy of the Judaizers seems to have been eradicated<sup>15</sup>

Klibanov considers that the Reformation movement came to the fore again after three or four decades through the activities of Matfei Bashkin and Feodosii Kosoi.<sup>16</sup> Matfei Bashkin came from a family of poor gentry and had a very successful career at the court of Ivan IV until 1553, when he was tried for heresy and condemned for blasphemy against the Trinity, evil speech against the church, iconoclasm and negation of all holy writings. Judging from an inventory of the "state papers" of the Moscow tsars made in the 1570's<sup>17</sup>, his trial was closely linked with an investigation into the heresy of two others: Artemii (former abbot of the Trinity Sergius monastery, perhaps the most important monastery in Muscovy) and Feodosii Kosoi. Unfortunately the papers themselves have not survived. Most of our information about the beliefs of the "new heretics", as they were called by the monk Zinovii Otenskii, comes from *his Testament of Truth*, written in refutation of their teaching in 1565<sup>18</sup>. Lur'e has noted<sup>19</sup> that Zinovii's accusations against the "new teaching" are familiar from the *Prosvetitel'* list of Judaizers' beliefs.

Bashkin's further fate is uncertain, though a foreign traveller in Muscovy reported the burning of Fedor Bashkin, presumed to have been his brother<sup>20</sup>. Artemii was excommunicated in 1554 and imprisoned in a monastery in Northern Russia, from which he managed to escape to the principality of Lithuania, Russia's neighbour and enemy. Investigation of his beliefs led to the imprisonment of Kosoi, who also escaped to Lithuania before his teaching and alleged followers were condemned in 1556-7<sup>21</sup>

The only clear link between the beliefs of the heretics listed above is that details of all of them are known only from condemnations and anti-heretical treatises if at all. We do possess manuscripts copied by one of the men named among the

Judaizers (Ivan Chernyi) and a version of the Dracula Tale<sup>22</sup> as well as some fragments attributed to another (Fedor Kuritsyn). But these are not clear statements of belief. Indeed the fragments written, translated, adapted or copied (it is not certain which applies) by Fedor Kuritsyn, have provided much material for speculation as to their meaning<sup>23</sup>

Klibanov argued that the heresies under consideration are a movement bound together by anti-Trinitarianism and anti-clericalism. Before considering anti-trinitarianism, we must look again at the origin of the information about this belief.

In matters of heretical belief it is notoriously difficult to find trustworthy evidence, undistorted either by torture or opponents. Throughout later medieval Europe heretics were presumed guilty until proved innocent, and such legal procedures as existed were not directed toward finding proof of heresy, but toward obtaining confession and recantation. Thereafter it was merely a matter of finding a suitable label for the heretics by syllogistic deduction. The accepted procedure for identifying heresy was as follows:

1. Noting observed or reported heretical practices
2. From these 'symptoms' identifying the heresies to which such practices or doctrines belong by reference to anti-heretical writings.
3. Interrogating heretics to discover who they associated with and try to obtain a confession, commonly by torture or ordeal.
4. By reference to "authorities" deducing other practices and doctrines of the "newly appeared" heretics and establishing the appropriate method of dealing with them (e.g. excommunication, anathematization, banishment, etc.).

As a result we can only obtain an "orthodox understanding" of what heretics did or believed. This orthodox understanding was based on the anti-heretical writings of St. Augustine in the West<sup>24</sup> and St. John of Damascus in the East, supplemented by a number of other tracts which allowed writers to ascertain how "new heresies" were corrupted by the "heresies of old".

Thus the twelfth century French writer Guibert of Nogent writes in his account of the heresy of a 'certain peasant named Clement' "if you review the heresies described by Augustine you will find this like none of them so much as the Manicheans" Archbishop Gennadii of Novgorod, who uncovered the heresy of the Judaizers in the fifteenth century also relies on a reference, in this case to the treatise *On the Reception of Heretics* written by Timotheos of Constantinople in the late sixth or early seventh century<sup>25</sup>, and incorporated in most Russian collections of canon laws<sup>26</sup>.

"For they (the Novgorod heretics who judaize) are covered by the same revealing curse (as the heretics who judaize), by which I mean the curse of Marcionism and Messalianism. For they (the Marcionites and Messalians) *also deny their teachings when questioned.....* And you will find the chapters about the Marcionites in your *pravila* (cannon laws)"

The problem with accusations of offences against dogma lies in the fact that to writers such as Guibert or Gennadii anyone opposed to one tenet of Christian belief blasphemed against the Tradition as a whole and against its constituent parts. Offence against one aspect of the faith could therefore mean imputation of a broad range of other offences.

A classic example of this can be found in the tract against Iconoclasts written by St. Theodore of Studios. He starts by attacking the Iconoclast prohibition of the images of Christ, a readily observable practice, and continues:

"All of us may be depicted... Hence Christ too may be depicted, even though the godless (Iconoclasts) think otherwise and so deny the mystery of the salutary incarnation. How, indeed, can the Son of God be acknowledged to have been a man like us... if He cannot, like us, be circumscribed ... For if He was not circumscribed then it was not out of her virginal blood that He fashioned a temple unto Himself ... It also follows that His mother was not really His mother, but one falsely so called; that He was not similar to us, but of a different nature; furthermore, that Adam has not been redeemed ... Further, it would follow that death has not been swallowed up and that worship according to the Law has not been abrogated ... Seest thou, Oh man of God, the abyss of impiety into which the Iconoclasts have been precipitated by believing that Christ should not be depicted on panels? without doubt they are judaizing"<sup>27</sup>

Nina Garsoian has noted in her study of Paulicianism that anti-heretical sources "are more apt to concern themselves with heretical practices which are readily observable than with abstruse points of doctrine"<sup>28</sup> Since one of the commonest "symptoms" of heretical behaviour was "crypto-Christianity" and willingness to forswear, it is not surprising that transcripts of the actual words of heretics are rare. This accounts for the recurrence of "set accusations" in descriptions of heresies discovered among men separated from each other by both geography and centuries.

An account of the trial of heretical clerks at the Synod of Orleans 1022 says that a certain Arefast had a clerk called Heribert who went to study in Orleans, where *two clerks seduced him with their wisdom, holiness and almsgiving.*<sup>29</sup> Though his time should have been spent on the study of true authors, *he fell blindly into the pit of heresy.* He tried to convert Arefast, who immedi-

ately in formed Count Richard and asked him to write to King Robert. Arefast then pretended that he wished to learn their teachings and by this ruse got them to reveal the depths of their wickedness. His list sounds remarkably like a statement of the basic tenets of the Christian faith with *not* added:

- a) Christ was not born of the Virgin Mary
- b) He did not suffer for men
- c) He was not really buried in the sepulchre
- d) and did not rise from the dead
- e) there is no cleansing of sin in baptism
- f) nor in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ administered by a priest.

This is followed by a vivid digression on the heretics' sexual blasphemies, taken, according to Moore, from Justin Martyr's account of slanders against the early Christians<sup>30</sup>, and also found in Slavonic anti-Catholic tracts.

When the heretics were brought before the king and queen they swore that they were not heretics. They were, nonetheless, condemned, but before they were led away the Queen struck out the eye of one of them, her *former confessor*.

An account of the measures taken a century later against the Bogomils by the Byzantine emperor<sup>31</sup> says that "there arose in extraordinary cloud of heretics, a *new*, hostile group... the *impiety of the Manicheans* (also known as the Paulician heresy) and the *loathsome character of the Messalians* were united in the Bogomils... A Bogomil wears a *sombre look.... but inside he's a ravening wolf*." "Anna Comnena's account of the Bogomil heresy, which was, of course, far from new, then tells of the torture of the heretics, who reveal the name of their leader, Basil. The emperor *summons him and pretends to wish to learn his teaching* so that Basil "belched out his blasphemous doctrine. Worse than that, he derided *our doctrine of the Divine Nature of Christ* and wholly misinterpreted his human nature." Anna Comnena cannot tell the rest "for if I did *my tongue would be sullied*". The emperor commands Euthemios Zygabenus to publish a list of all heresies... and to append in each case the refutation in the texts of the holy fathers". An investigation showed that Bogomilism "had penetrated *even the greatest houses* and *enormous numbers* were affected."

In 1307 King Philip IV of France sent out instructions for the arrest of members of the Order of the Temple who *entertaining a wolf under the appearance of a lamb* had by their words and deeds *defiled the land with their filth*"<sup>32</sup>. As a result of events initiated by the king, the Templars were brought to trial for heresy and their order was suppressed. Malcolm Barber's monograph

on the affair has shown that the Templars were condemned on the initiative of the king and that the charges of heresy are highly suspect. They are extensive, and include the charges that they *denied Christ, sometimes Christ crucified, sometimes Jesus and sometimes God, and sometimes the Holy Virgin, and sometimes all the saints of God*<sup>33</sup>.

I have cited above the "Blasphemies" which the fifteenth century Judaizers were accused of. They were apparently guilty of everything attributed to the Templars. Of course the derivativeness of anti-heretical writing does not mean that those who argue for a continuity of ideas from Manicheanism to Bogomilism and the heresies of the medieval West<sup>34</sup> or for the existence of a Russian reformation movement are proved wrong. I happen to agree with R.I. Moore that "the historians most sceptical of the assertions of continuity between different heresies have often been those whose views have lasted longest," but I am aware that a healthy scepticism about sources can leave us with almost no trustworthy evidence about heretics.

The churches of both East and West know figures such as Meister Eckhart or Maxim the Greek, whose ideas (or aspects of them) were condemned by the church as heretical in their lifetime, but were subsequently allowed to be aspects of Christian rather than heretical thought. I do not know of any heretic in the Catholic church who has been canonised after his death, as happened, for example, to Maxim the Greek, but even that is perfectly logical. It is the established church which decrees what "errors" constitute a heresy, and errors which are seen as major heresies in times of crisis can be viewed as offences against discipline when the church is secure.

But to be able to re-evaluate the ideas of a heretic/reformer the church (and the historian) must possess more than anti-heretical writings or fragments to go on. The arguments about the nature of the thought of Meister Eckhart or Jan Hus can continue, because their ideas have survived. The arguments about the nature of the ideas of Russian heretics cannot. We should, therefore, ask ourselves about the nature of the society which condemned them.

The Reformation was the culmination of several developments, whose role as "enabling factors" is broadly agreed, though there is much debate about their relative importance. Renaissance humanism encouraged a re-evaluation of both the classical and Christian traditions of European thought, and the introduction of printing stimulated the dissemination of ideas outside the confines of the universities. The growth of national self-awareness encouraged



the use of the vernacular and the establishment of the concept of the nation-state as opposed to "one religion - one empire" Increased economic prosperity and the growth of cities meant increased mobility for men and ideas and, with anti-clericalism, ensured support for Protestant challenges to the established church.

Few of these factors were present in the Russia of the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries. D.S. Likhachev has postulated the existence of a pre-Renaissance" in Russia and several scholars have sought to identify humanist ideas in Russian literature of the period, but few would argue for a fully-fledged Renaissance or humanist culture in a country whose political history in that period meant that most human resources had to be devoted to defence. To take just one telling example: fifteen universities were founded in Central Europe alone between 1348 and 1506<sup>35</sup>, Russia had none. Printing was not introduced until the late sixteenth-century; one ill-fated attempt by Ivan IV to bring Danish printers to Moscow in 1552 resulted in the investigation of Matfei Bashkin's heresy<sup>36</sup>

In Russia, as in Western Europe, the fifteenth and early sixteenth century saw the emergence of a nation-state. But "the state of Germany helped Luther"<sup>37</sup> partly because of tensions between papal and national aspirations. The Byzantine Orthodox church could not oppose the emergence of Russia as a nation-state after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1452. Indeed it has been argued that the Byzantine church encouraged the centralization of power in Russia<sup>38</sup>

It was inevitable that a privileged clergy would arouse opposition from the under-privileged, and anti-clericalism was ever present in the Russian church. But the factors which made anti-clericalism a strong radical force in Protestant Europe, such as the resistance of the Catholic church to the use of the vernacular, desired by an educated laity and supported by many churchmen, did not exist in Russia. The general level of lay (and clerical) education was much lower than in Western Europe, and in any case the vernacular had been in use in the Russian church since the conversion of Russia.

The question of Russia's economic development in this period is of key importance, and its strengths in relation to the economic development of Western Europe has been much discussed<sup>39</sup> There is no doubt that at least until the middle of the sixteenth century both the economy and the cities grew, but, judging from the evidence of education and lay culture, not enough to produce enough "disposable income" for either.

I would argue, therefore, that the concept of a "Reformation" has little meaning when applied to Russia in the period under discussion. Yet it is a period characterized by an increase in anti-heretical polemic, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. How can this be explained? I would suggest that the political and economic situation in Russia encouraged *reformatio*, a re-evaluation and reform of its inheritance. The evidence for this comes from a number of sources both inside and outside the church. The revision of both secular and monastic legislation (law codes and monastic rules), the centralization of chronicle writing, new redactions of indexes of forbidden books, the compilation of a new Calendar of Saints all these are aspects of the same "movement" which produced the *Prosvetitel'* of Iosif of Volokolamsk and the *Testament of Truth* of Zinovii Otenskii. For these works are as much a re-statement of the established tenets of the Orthodox faith as an attack on heretics.

In the period between 1380 and 1550 Russia freed itself of the overlordship of the Tatars and, after the destruction of the Byzantine Empire, established its position as the sole remaining powerful Orthodox state. It is always difficult to speak with any certainty about cause and effect in the history of phenomena as complex as heresy. Russian heresies did challenge the existing order, but in an atmosphere where the challenge would have been noted and exploited. It is in this sense that they should be viewed as aspects of Russia's own movement the *Reformatio*.

1. N. A. KAZAKOVA & Ia. S. LUR'E. *Antifeodal'nye ereticheskie dvizheniia na Rusi v XIV - nachala XVI veka*. Moskva-Leningrad 1955 (hereafter AED); Ia. S. LUR'E. *Ideologicheskaiia bor'ba v russkoi publitsistike kontsa XV - nachala XVI veka*. Moskva-Leningrad 1960.

2. A. I. KLIBANOV *Reformatsionnye dvizheniia v Rosii v XIV-pervoi polovine XVI v.v.* Moskva 1960 (hereafter RD).

3. RD:253.

4. A. A. ZIMIN. *Osnovnye problemy reformatsionno-gumanisticheskogo dvizheniia v Rossii XIV-XVI vv.* "Istoriia, fol'klor, iskusstvo slavianskikh narodov", Moskva 1963; A. A. ZIMIN & A. L. KHOROSHKVICH. *Rossii vremeni Ivana Groznogo*. Moskva 1982; N. M. ZOLOTUKHINA. *Iosif Vologskii* Moskva 1981:98 and passim IDEM. *Razvitie russkoi pravovoi mysli*. Moskva 1985:68 et seq. See also the opening paragraph of the article by Professor Lur'e in the present volume.

5. N. M. TIKHOMIROV. *Otzyv o doktorskoi dissertatsii A. I. Klibanova* IN N. M. TIKHOMIROV. *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo XV-XVII vv.*, Moskva 1973;

A. M. SAKHAROV *Religiia i tserkov'*, "Ocherki russkoi kul'tury XIV-XV vv." pt.2, Moskva 1969:76; E. HOSCH. *Orthodoxie und Haresie im alten Russland*, Wiesbaden 1975.

6. PSRL IV. St. Petersburg 1848:72.

7. With one possible exception, Tikhom. 39p from the USSR Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk.

8. AED:234-255.

9. A. POPPE. *Eshche raz o nazvanii novgorodsko-pskovskikh eretikov strigol'nikami* "Kul'tura drevnei Rusi", Moskva 1966:204-207.

10. AED:252,241,254,238.

11. RD:136-157.

12. RD:157-166.

13. AED:256-526. AED, together with *Poslaniia Iosifa Volotskogo* (eds. A. A. Zimin & Ia. S. Lur'e) Moskva-Leningrad 1959 has gathered most of the available sources on the heresy of the *strigol'niki* and the Judaizers. The *Prosvetitel'* of Iosif of Volokolamsk is one source still awaiting a new critical edition.

14. I. VOLOTSKII. *Prosvetitel'*. Kazan' 1903:33-7.

15. AED:74-221, 256-521. The heresy is considered in detail in my *The Heresy of the Judaizers and the Problem of the Russian Reformation* (unpublished Oxford University D.Phil. thesis) and will be re-examined in my *Heresy and Treason*.

16. RD:265-6.

17. S. D. SHMIDT. *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo v seredine XVI stoletia*, Moskva 1984:73.

18. RD:271.

19. AED:223.

20. R. G. SKRYNNIKOV. *Ivan Groznyi*. Moskva 1983:52.

21. RD:267-310; A. A. ZIMIN *Ivan Peresvetov i ego sovremenniki*, Moskva 1958; A. A. ZIMIN and A. L. KHOROSHKVICH *Rossia vremeni Ivana Groznogo*. Moskva 1982:73-78.

22. *Povest' o Drakule*. Moskva-Leningrad 1964.

23. Discussed in detail in J. S. LURIA (Ia. S. Lur'e). *Unresolved Issues in the History of the Ideological Movements of the Late Fifteenth Century*. "Medieval Russian Culture". "California Slavic Studies", 12(1984):150-174.

24. R. I. MOORE. *The Origins of European Dissent*. London 1977:27,67.

25. J.-P. MIGNE. *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeco-latina* (hereafter MPG). vol. 86, cols. 11-68.
26. J. R. HOWLETT *The Heresy of the Judaizers* : 25-27; *Svedetel'stvo arkhiepiskopa Gennadiia o eresi 'zhidovskaa mudr"stvuiushchikh'* (forthcoming).
27. MPG, vol. 99, cols. 1187-90.
28. N. GARSOIAN. *The Paulician Heresy*. The Hague 1967:158.
29. All sources for Western heresies are taken from *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, (eds. W. L. Wakefield and A. P. Evans) New York 1969, unless otherwise stated.
30. R. I. MOORE. *The Origins of European Dissent*. London 1977:27.
31. The date is not certain. *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*. London 1969:496-500.
32. M. BARBER. *The Trial of the Templars*. Cambridge 1978:45.
33. IBID:248.
34. A. DONDAINE. *L'origine de l'heresie medievale*. "Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia" 6(1952):78.
35. J. M. TODD. *Reformation*. London 1971:41; see ANNE HUDSON'S article in the present volume for one illustration of the importance of universities in the transmission of texts and ideas.
36. R. G. SKRYNNIKOV. *Ivan Groznyi*. Moskva 1983:52.
37. G. R. ELTON. *Reformation Europe 1517-1559*. London 1963:33.
38. J. MEYENDORFF. *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*. Cambridge 1981.
39. See R. HELLIE. *The Foundations of Russian Capitalism*. "Slavic Review" 26(1967):148-54.